



# PROGRAM NEWS

United States Agency for International Development

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**USAID/Nicaragua  
Development Program  
1998-2003  
(U.S. Millions of Dollars)**

<i>Rule of Law and Good Governance</i>	<b>43.6</b>
<i>Small Producers</i>	<b>47.0</b>
<i>Natural Resources</i>	<b>14.0</b>
<i>Healthy Families</i>	<b>35.0</b>
<i>Primary Education</i>	<b>17.5</b>
<i>Food Aid</i>	<b>55.0</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>US\$ 212.1</b>



## USAID Projects Improving Health and Economic Growth in Wiwili

**Wiwili, Nicaragua**—The mountain town of Wiwili, located on the Coco River 270 km north of Managua, was severely damaged by Hurricane Mitch in October 1998. More than 600 homes were destroyed when the Coco River rose 30 meters above its banks. The water covered the town's hospital, destroyed schools and washed away crops. Several days later, 500 bodies, carried downstream by the river's currents, floated in front of the devastated community.

Now, a little over three years after the disaster the town shows signs of recovery. Boats from up-river communities land at a new dock to unload sacks of coffee and other products on their way to market while passengers wait to board the small outboard motor crafts that serve as the main form of transportation along the river. A new hospital will



**A USAID-funded World Relief project promotes diversification with higher-value crops at a 57-acre agricultural resource center.**

soon open its doors to the public; and crops once again cover the land.

Many of these activities are receiving assistance from USAID. At a cost of about \$300,000 USAID financed the construction of the new dock that provides indigenous communities located along the Coco River a way to bring products to market and to transport provisions. The concrete mooring area and paved access road facilitates loading and unloading, which has increased commerce in the community.

Immediately after the destruction by Hurricane Mitch, U.S. Army troops built a temporary medical facility with a 30-bed capacity. The Nicaraguan government has since built a permanent new medical center. USAID funded the water and

*(Continued on page 2)*



**A new dock in Wiwili, built with USAID Hurricane Mitch Reconstruction funds, improved transportation and increased commerce for communities along the Coco River.**

## USAID Projects Improving Health and Economic Growth....

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sanitation system for the new facilities and built housing for medical staff. In addition, USAID repaired three other health posts in the municipality of Wiwili and constructed medical staff housing in four outlying communities. All the facilities received medical equipment to provide basic maternal and child health care services. In cooperation with the U.S. Army, the PROSALUD project facilitated the donation of hospital equipment that will permit the new hospital in Wiwili to open. USAID also provided radio communication and solar energy systems in all the staff housing and health posts to guarantee a source of energy 24 hours a day.

Approximately 3,300 households in the Wiwili area are receiving assistance through a USAID-funded World Relief agricultural project. The agricultural resource center set up by the program in the community of Cruz Laguna in Wiwili promotes higher-value alternative crops. The 57-acre experimental farm grows more than 38,000 plants of a wide variety, including cinnamon, macadamia nuts, pepper, avocado, passion fruit and other tropical fruits, such as rambutan, lichee and longan. The site also tests new varieties of plantains and bananas that will give producers higher yields and promotes the use of improved, certified seeds.

Ivania Morán, one of the participants in the World Relief project, more than doubled her corn yield by using improved seed.



**The Maleconcito Health Post received medical equipment and radio communication and solar energy systems. A housing facility was built for medical staff.**

Morán, a mother of two, has diversified her crops by planting cinnamon and rambutan fruit, plants that she obtained through the USAID-financed agricultural resource center.

Producer Santiago Castillo increased his income by planting improved plantain varieties that yield bunches with three times as many plantains as the traditional variety. With assistance from the project, he also is diversifying his crops.

"The advantage of these new crops is that they have a higher value, which will mean more income for me," said Castillo.

In addition, USAID, through World Relief, financed a post harvest agricultural service center in Wiwili. The center provides post-harvest management services (drying, cleaning, classifying and storing) for coffee, cocoa, basic grains and spices. The services, provided on a fee basis, allow farmers to store grains and wait for better prices. Producers can also receive credit while they wait to sell. Farmers using the services have earned up to 62% more for their corn crop than they would have earned selling corn at harvest time.



**Drying and storage equipment at the Wiwili Agricultural Service Center, allows producers to store grains and wait for better prices.**

### *Improving Health in Wiwili*

*Dr. Carlos Martinez and nurse Gladys Guerrero, recently assigned to the Maleconcito health post in Wiwili, moved into a new housing facility that provides them a luxury they didn't have at their last post—lights. Both the housing and the solar energy system were built and installed with USAID funding through the PROSALUD project. The health post where Martinez and Guerrero now work also received a radio communication system and medical equipment.*

*Said Dr. Martinez: "Now I don't have to deliver babies by candlelight."*



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